

Western MRS Meeting
St. John s Episcopal Church in Asheville
March 23, 2006

Counties Present: Avery, Buncombe, Catawba, Cherokee, Cleveland, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Polk, Rutherford, Transylvania, Yancey

Community Partners:

Mountain Youth Resources (IFPS, RU, FP)
Children s First (FRC)

Introductions

Who

Where

What

Collaborative Efforts

Training Update

Cornerstone III

Policy Training

Lets Talk Collaboration

Rutherford Coordinate b/w WF and CPS when there are joint families, joint visits, MRS committee with folks from each discipline, assist with CPS cases (i.e. drug tests), WF worker who also works a lot with DV.

Catawba collaborate within their agency and in house.

Transylvania pull WF into CFT and do some joint family visits.

McDowell new for them so here to get ideas about collaboration, new director firm belief that DSS must collaborate don t exist in a vacuum, trying to be more innovative. Child Care cases that involve CPS are given to employment/cash assistance workers.

Cleveland collaborate with WF, Food Stamp, and Child Support. Attend CFT together, update each other on locations of clients and any changes in the home. Have an MRS committee to ensure, among other things, collaboration happens.

Macon WF invited to staffings when appropriate. Feedback to WF on home visits.

Buncombe CPS invited to WF staffings, want to see how they can grow their collaboration

Cherokee have a MH case mgr that comes to staffings so can do referral right then Educates MH as to what they are about. (MH does not charge them for this.)

Madison here to learn, her supervisor is former CPS so she knows each side

Mountain Youth Resources attends DSS staff meetings, task forces, Intensive Family Preservation Services, Reunification, Family Preservation.

Children First of Buncombe Co - Teach Love & Logic parenting classes for DSS referred clients. Also collaborate with many community agencies.

Avery WF and CPS actually share an office. Small county so very close with all aspects of agency and know each other's cases. Community collaborative with families and other community agencies that meets monthly.

Polk Informal but good collaboration with CPS/WF, line workers are on community collaborative, faith based committee, help with community food distribution so their presence is in the community. It's a small county so it's easy to do. Walk-a-thon with Sheriff's Dept and DV people.

Yancey in 3 different buildings so that has made them consciously collaborate with each other. Regular staffings with each other. WF is able to provide some resources that CPS not normally accustomed to using. Has gone on some home visits.

Courtney Smith AFI trains cornerstone curriculums

Training Update

- As of April 15th Cornerstone 3 will be blended. DSS has worked to blend the two so there is one training. The first 2 days were the same anyway. The practice day was the one that was different. To blend these, AFI has made a self study guide to ensure that you will know what you need to know and have some practice still at the training. Courtney said there will be some homework assignments so that they can maximize the training experience, so people should be prepared. And, don't expect the attendees to go to training and then go to work at 4pm!! The homework is short (45 mins) but they will need to do it. If you have been to 3B and you now realize that you really need 3A because you are going to be doing family assessments, you can use the self study guide and not have to go to this training again (will still need MRS policy training). Self study guide on the web.

Policy training dates:

5/3 Rowan

5/9 Black Mtn Library

- 5/10 - Edgecombe Co (getting full, may add one more, but not for sure)
- If you want to go just call Holly and give her a number of participants so she has enough training materials. These are the last policy trainings that are planned for some time. Hope to have Cornerstone blended into Pre-Service by the end of the calendar year. If anyone thinks you will need more, let Holly know ASAP.

April Meeting dates

4/21 Lenoir Co
 4/25 Henderson Co
 4/26 Cabarrus Co
 4/28 Alamance original 10 meeting

How can we collaborate?

How can the communication between CPS and WF go better from the very get go?

- When someone comes in for assistance, they look in their computer system to see if that person has an open CPS cases. And if they do, the CPS worker is contacted.
- CPS send WF a monthly list of open cases with parent and child names so that WF can check that list.
- Report in DataWarehouse where you can locate by SSN (Client SSN search) and will tell you from EIS, SIS, if there has been any contact statewide with that person (however, CPS focus on child, and WF on adult, so sometimes this report will not tell you that the child belongs to the parent.)

Need to know you can share information among programs in your agency.

- Problem with checking SIS is that is usually not entered until CPS case is closed and if they are found not in need of services the case is closed. Smaller counties can probably tell you off the top of her head, and bigger counties may have a computer program.
- Some counties have a clerical person run matches and pulls the record and gives it to the appropriate person.

Is anyone making WF or CPS mandatory collaterals?

- Some yes, and they feel that they get good information from it if they do it consistently.
- Used to have a worker that checked logs every day (took 10 minutes) for cases that came in to see if new reports were already involved with the agency.
- One county developed form to put in the front of the record that listed each part of agency that dealt with family and the worker who did it so the next person that gets the file can know who to contact about information.

Mountain Youth Resources has participated in CFTs and they have been helpful.

WF sees a bigger picture of the family by going to CFTs. See the other barriers and what else the family is dealing with.

Are counties (WF and CPS) working together on case plans?

- Believe that the WF person should be a part of the case plan so that the two parts of the agency don't put the family in a position where they can't complete both case plans. How can she find a job when she is also required to be a parenting classes, and getting a GED.

How would you work around the conflicting issues?

- WF person would make a schedule and expect her to keep it, but if she knew when the parenting classes etc, were she would work with her. Let her get the parenting classes and MH therapy out of the way, because the job search isn't going to work if she is worried about not keeping her kids. Can put the CPS requirements into the WF agreements. If the WF person doesn't know about the barriers, they will set the up schedule in a way that mom can't meet it and she will end up losing her check.

Far west DSS has done a good job of bringing community partners to table early at CFTs etc. so they are involved in the beginning.

Make sure the collaboration between CPS and WF goes both ways. We always think of WF helping CPS, but vice versa too.

- If dad moves back in the house WF needs to know about it, and they might not know, but CPS knows, they should tell. The policy when WF gets audited, is that if someone in the county knows, the county knew, so if CPS knew dad was there, and WF did not and family was not following requirements of 2 parent homes, then they will have to pay that back.

MRS is about looking at our rules and policies and talking about how do these work best for families? Some of the rules that we have don't work well for families.

Sometimes you have to work a little harder within your agency because you know you might not be working with the most responsible client.

- The client probably sees all DSS people as the same and may not consciously realize that just because they only told the CPS worker, the WF person doesn't know it they see us as all just DSS. It also helps you serve people better, because just like mentioned above, everyone that has expectations of the family needs to understand where the family is coming from and what their barriers.

Do counties have a quick and dirty cross training between WF and CPS. Do CPS and WF know what they need to share?

- Rutherford new workers have to have a meeting with all supervisors who give them a synopsis of their work. CPS workers. CPS worker brought client into WF office and sat there while she ran the client through services so that she could better understand.
- Catawba new worker orientation, have notebooks that talk about each part of the agency and the requirements.
- Transylvania share at staff meetings
- McDowell working on it, having different parts of agencies come to meetings, also think it is important to cross train with their community partners so they understand what each other is about.
- Cleveland new worker orientation, any changes sent to supervisors who pass along
- Macon very small so not formal orientation, just talk with other workers
- Buncombe 15 minute presentations from each department, lunch and learns
- Cherokee small agency so open communication
- Madison more communication between the supervisors
- MYR Collaboration with DSS they go to team meetings so they know about cases that they have and cases that they might get. Also have a new insight on some of the DSS cases.
- Avery no official plan, but small so think it happens somewhat. Like the idea of lunch and learn and the handouts. CPS and WF sharing an office helps.
- Polk - rare to have new employees but sometimes she will give them a list of other DSS divisions and the community partners and the workers have to talk to everyone on this list. Also a good way to fill the gap between the time they are hired and they go to pre-service and can serve cases.
- Yancey tried lots of things

Things Holly has heard:

- Job shadowing for days, sometimes just supervisors did it and then they reported back to their workers.
- Lunch & Learn good way to maintain, because you can do a bunch of stuff when you start but they get busy and lose knowledge or don't keep up with changes. Easy to say you don't have time for another meetings, but in the long run they will save you time. Ask staff for ideas.

To do MRS right, it has to be the whole agency and community anyway. Especially with the community, have to keep educating.

Let Holly know what you would like to talk about at future meetings.

- Frustrated with the safety assessment not in duplicate, so they have to fill it out twice since they have to give a copy to the family at the time it is completed. (Some counties have had them made in duplicate.)

- Strengths and Needs forms for Foster Care - in preadoptive placements or relative placements. Do they still need to do those? Think they found somewhere that it was a good idea. There are lots of places we suggest they are a good idea but they are not required.

Everyone has done some family assessments.

Who has Blended Caseloads any kind?

Rutherford WF and Day Care,
 Catawba WF blended eligibility and employment
 Transylvania no
 McDowell do assessment and case management (small so some other blending)
 Cleveland no
 Buncombe - employment and family assistance
 Cherokee yes (assessment/case management & WF)
 Madison no
 Avery some blended, no policy yet about it
 Polk totally blended all the way through foster care (paperwork overwhelming)
 Yancey no (WF and employment blended)

Where do you start blending WF cash assistance and employment?

- Catawba - Asked for volunteers to be generic WF workers. Only lost one worker who didn't want to cross train. Grandfathered in people that did not have 4 year degrees. Most of the folks like the fact that they have merged them together. One less person for the family to see. Caseloads close to 50 per worker.
- The strategy that gets SW the most bang for the buck collaboration helps you as a social worker. Easier for everyone when all are at the table. Once you get into the swing of it, it reduces stress and running around and checking on things the family said.

Is anyone passing services recommended cases to WF?

- Caldwell has a policy to do that. But it has only happened 3 or 4 times in the 3 years that they have been doing it because they only do it with families that already had a WF case open. They had a WF social worker who had been a CPS worker when they started that.

WF doesn't know what CPS doesn't know, so they don't know what to tell you. Figuring out what resources WF has in an ongoing issue, there may be things that WF can do, that you had no idea about it. Many families think because they can't get a check, that they can't get anything out of WF.